

Aramaic Targum to Ecclesiastes

תרגום קהלת

merged

https://www.sefaria.org/Aramaic_Targum_to_Ecclesiastes

This file contains merged sections from the following text versions:

-Cohleth, trans. by C.D.Ginsburg, London 1861

-Cohleth, Commonly called the Book of Ecclesiastes in 1861, by C.D. Gill

-Sefaria Community Translation

-<https://www.sefaria.org>

Aramaic Targum to Ecclesiastes

Chapter 1

The words of prophecy which Cohleth, that is, the son of David the King, who was in Jerusalem, prophesied.

When Solomon the King of Israel foresaw, by the spirit of prophecy, the kingdom of Rehoboam his son, which will be divided with Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and that Jerusalem and the holy temple will be destroyed, and that the people of Israel will be led into captivity, he said by the divine word, Vanity of vanities is this world! Vanity of vanities is all which I and my father David have laboured for, all of it is vanity! What advantage is there to a man, after his death, from all his labour which he laboured under the sun in this world, except he studied the word of God, in order to receive a good reward in the world to come from before the Lord of the world?

King Solomon said, by the spirit of prophecy, The good generation of the righteous departs from the world because of the sins of the wicked generation that is to follow them, but the earth abides for ever and ever, to reserve the punishment which is to come upon the world, on account of the sins of the children of men.

And the sun rises in the day from the east, and the sun goes down in the west by night, and hastens to its place, and goes through the path under the sea and rises the following day from the place where it rested yesterday;

it goes all the side of the south in the day, and goes round to the side of the north by night, through the path under the sea; it turns round and round to the wind of the south corner in the revolution of Nisan and Tamuz, and returns on its circuits to the wind of the north corner in the revolution of Tishri and Tebeth, it comes through the windows of the east in the morning, and goes into the windows of the west in the evening. All the rivers and streams of water go and flow into the waters of the ocean which surround the world like a ring, and the ocean is not full, and to the place where the streams go and flow there they go again through the channels of the sea.

The ancient prophets have exerted themselves in all the things which will take place in the world, and they could not find out their end; therefore, a man has no power to declare what will be after him, neither can the eye see all that is to be in the world, nor can the ear be filled with hearing all the words of the inhabitants of the earth.

What was aforesaid, the same will be afterwards again, and what was done aforesaid the same will be done again to the end of all generations, and there is no new thing in the world under the sun.

There may be something of which a man says, Behold, this a new thing, but it has been long ago, in the generations which were before us.

There is no remembrance of former generations, and also of the coming ones that will be, there will be no remembrance of them among the generations that will be in the days of the King Messiah.

When King Solomon was sitting upon the throne of his kingdom, his heart became very proud of his riches, and he transgressed the word of God, and he gathered many horses, and chariots, and riders, and he amassed much gold and silver, and he married from foreign nations, whereupon the anger of the Lord was kindled against him, and he sent to him Ashmoda the king of the demons, who drove him from the throne of his kingdom, and took away the ring from his hand, in order that he should roam and wander about in the world to reprove it; and he went about in the provincial towns and the cities of the land of Israel, weeping and lamenting, and saying, I am Coheleth, whose name was formerly called Solomon, who was king over Israel in Jerusalem;

and I gave my heart to ask instruction from God at the time when he appeared unto me in Gibeon, to try me, and to ask me what I desire of him, and I asked nothing of him except wisdom, to know the difference between good and evil, and knowledge of whatsoever was done under the sun in this world, and I saw all the works of the wicked children of men - a bad business which God gave to the children of men to be afflicted by it; I saw all the works of the children of men which were done under the sun in this world; behold, all is vanity and breaking of the spirit.

A man whose ways are perverted in this world, and who dies therein and does not repent, has no power to become right after his death; and whoso departs from the law and the precepts in his life, has no power to be numbered with the righteous in paradise after his death.

I spake with the thoughts of my heart, saying: I, behold! I have increased and multiplied wisdom above all the wise who were before me in Jerusalem, and my heart has seen much wisdom and knowledge;

and I gave my heart to know wisdom, and the fear of the Kingdom, and knowledge and discretion, I know it by experience that even this is a breaking of the spirit to the man who is employed to find them out.

Because a man who increases his knowledge when he is guilty, and does not repent, increases the anger of God; and he who accumulates wisdom and dies in his youth, increases the sadness of heart to his relations.

Chapter 2

I said in my heart, I will go now and try mirth, and behold the good of this world; and when pain and affliction befell me, I said by the divine word, Also this is vanity.

To laughter I said, in time of affliction. It is mockery; and to mirth. What profit is it to the man who indulges in it?

I tried in my heart to enrapture my flesh in the house of the feast of wine, and my heart conducted with wisdom, and to seize the folly of youth, until I examined and saw which of them was good for the children of men, that they may do while they abide in this world under the heavens, the number of the days of their life.

I multiplied good works in Jerusalem. I built houses, viz., the temple, to make atonement for Israel, and a royal palace, and the conclave, and the porch, and a house of judgment of hewn stones, where the wise men sit, and the judges, to give judgment; I made a throne of ivory for the sitting of royalty; I planted vineyards in Jabne, that I and the Rabbis of the Sanhedrin might drink wine, and also to make libations of wine, new and old, upon the altar;

I made watered gardens and parks, and I sowed there all kinds of herbs, some for food, some for drink, and some for medicine, and all kinds of aromatics; I planted therein sterile trees, and aromatic trees, which the spectres and evil spirits brought me from India, and all kinds of fruit-bearing trees; and its boundary was from the wall of the city of Jerusalem to the margin of the river Siloah;

I made receptacles of water, whence to water the trees and the herbs; I made pools of water, to water from them even the thicket which produces fine wood;

I bought bond-men and bond-women from the children of Ham, and other foreign nations; and I had officers placed over the eatables of my house, to provide for me and the people of my house food twelve months of the year, and one to provide for me during the leap-year; I had also cattle and sheep more than all generations before me in Jerusalem;

I gathered also treasures of silver and gold; even right weights and measures I made from good gold; and the treasures of kings and provinces were given to me as tribute; I made for the temple musical instruments, that the Levites might play them at the sacrifices, and citherns and flutes that the male and female singers might play them in the wine house, and the delights of the children of men; and warm springs, and baths, channels pouring out cold water, and channels pouring out warm water;

and I multiplied goods and increased riches more than all generations before me in Jerusalem, because my wisdom stood with me and assisted me; and whatsoever the Rabbis of the Sanhedrin asked of me respecting pure and impure, innocent and guilty, I did not withhold from them any explanation of these things; and I did not keep my heart from the joy of the law, because I had the inclination of heart to enjoy the wisdom given me by God more than any man, and rejoiced in it more than in all my labour; and this was my good portion which was assigned to me, so that I might receive for it a good reward in the world to come, more than for all my labour.

And I considered all my works which my hands had worked, and my labours which I had laboured to do, and behold! it was all vanity and breaking of spirit; and there is no profit in them under the sun in this world; but I shall have full reward for good work in the world to come.

And I gave attention to consider wisdom, and the fear of the kingdom and understanding, because what use is there to a man to pray after the decree of the King, and after retribution? behold! it is then already decreed about him and executed on him.

And I saw by the spirit of prophecy that there is an advantage to wisdom over folly, above the advantage of the light of the day over the darkness of night.

The wise man reflects in the beginning what there will be at last, and prays and averts the evil decree from the world; while the fool walks in darkness; and I also know that if the wise man does not pray, and avert the evil decree from the world, when retribution shall come upon the world, the same destiny shall befall them all.

And I said in my heart, a destiny like that of Saul, the son of Kish, the king, who turned aside, and did not keep the commandment given to him about Amalek, and the kingdom was taken from him, will also befall me; and why then am I wiser than he? And I said in my heart, that also this is vanity, and there is nothing except the decree of the Lord.

For the remembrance of the wise man is not with the fool in the world to come, for after the death of a man, that which happened long ago in his lifetime, when the days come which are to follow him after his death, everything will be disclosed; and why, then, say the children of men. that the end of the righteous is like that of the wicked?

And I hated all evil life, because the evil work which is done against the children of men under the sun in this world displeased me, for it is all vanity, and breaking of spirit.

And I hated all my labour which I laboured under the sun in this world, for I must leave it to Rehoboam my son, who comes after me, and Jeroboam his servant will come and take away out of his hands ten tribes, and will possess half of the kingdom.

And who knows whether wise or foolish will be the king who is to be after me, and reign over all my labour which I laboured in this world, and over all which I accomplish in my wisdom under the sun in this world? and I was confounded in my heart, and again said: This, too, is vanity. And I turned about to despair respecting all my labour which laboured to acquire, and was wise to accomplish under the sun in this world. Because there is a man whose labour is in wisdom, reason, and justice, and he dies without issue; and to a man who did not labour for it, he is to give it, that it may be his portion; also this is vanity, and a great evil.

For what pleasure has this man for all his labour and breaking of his heart, wherewith he laboured under the sun in this world?

For all his days are sorrowful, and his business kindles his anger, even in the night he sleeps not on account of the thoughts of his heart; this too is vanity.

There is nothing comely for a man but that he eat, drink, and make his soul see good before the sons of men, in order to do the commandments, to walk in the straight path before him, so that it may be well with him from his labour; also this I saw, that if a man prospers in this world, it is from the hand of the Lord, who decrees it so for him.

For who is occupied with the words of the law, and who is the man that has anxiety about the great day of judgment which is to come, besides me? For to the man whose works are straight before God, he gave wisdom and knowledge in this world, and joy with the righteous in the world to come; and to the wicked he gave all evil employment, to gather money and to heap up much wealth, to be taken away from him, and to be given to him who pleases the Lord; this, too, is vanity for the wicked, and breaking of spirit.

Chapter 3

To every man comes a time, and to every thing an opportune season under the sun.

There is a special time to beget sons and daughters, and a special time for killing disobedient and perverse children, to kill them with stones according to the decree of the judges; and an opportune time for planting a tree, and an opportune time for rooting up a planted tree:

an opportune time for killing in war, and an opportune time for healing the sick; an opportune time to destroy a building, and an opportune time to build up a ruin:

a time to bewep the dead, and an opportune time to be joyful with laughter; an opportune time to mourn over the slain, and an opportune time to dance at nuptials;

an opportune time to throw away a heap of stones, and an opportune time to gather stones for a building; an opportune time to embrace a wife, and an opportune time to abstain from embracing her, in the seven days of mourning;

an opportune time to wish for riches, and an opportune time to lose riches; an opportune time to keep merchandise, and an opportune time to throw merchandise into the sea, during a great storm;

an opportune time to tear the garment for the dead, and an opportune time to sew together the torn pieces; an opportune time to be silent and not to rebuke, and an opportune time to speak words of reproof;

an opportune time to love each other, and an opportune time to hate the wicked; an opportune time to make war, and an opportune time to restore peace.

What advantage has the toiling man, who labours to make treasures, and to gather mammon, unless he is helped by Providence from above?

I saw the painful business and punishment which the Lord gave to the children of men who are wicked, to afflict them therewith.

King Solomon said by the spirit of prophecy, God made everything beautiful in its time; for it was opportune that there should be the strife which was in the days of Jeroboam, son of Neboth; it was to have been in the days of Sheba, son of Bichri, and it was delayed, and came to pass in the days of Jeroboam, son of Nebat; for if it had been in the days of Sheba, son of Bichri, the temple would not have been built, because of the golden calves which the wicked Jeroboam made, and placed one in Beth-el and one in Dan, and put watches on the road, and they stopped the pilgrims to the feasts; and therefore it was delayed up to the time when the temple was built, in order not to hinder Israel to build it. He concealed from them also the great Name written and expressed on the foundation-stone, the evil inclinations in their hearts being known to Him; for if it had been delivered into the hands of men, they would have used it, and found by it what will come to pass in the latter days, world without end; and He also hid from them the day of death, in order that it should not be known to man from the beginning what will come to pass at the end.

King Solomon said by the spirit of prophecy, I know that there is nothing good among the children of men, but that they rejoice in the joy of the law, and do good in the days of their life.

And also that if any man eats and drinks and sees good in his days, and causes his children to inherit all his labour in the time of his death, this is a gift given to him from the Lord.

I know by the spirit of prophecy, that everything which the Lord does in the world, whether good or evil, whatsoever is decreed from His mouth, will be for ever; to it man has no power to add, nor has any one power to take from it; and at the same time, when punishment comes into the world, it is the Lord who does it, that the children of man may fear before Him. What has been from the beginning has come to pass; and what will be at the end of days has already happened; and at the great day of judgment the Lord will demand the poor and the needy from the hands of the wicked who persecuted him.

And further, I saw under the sun in this world, the place of judgment, in which false judges condemn the innocent, in his judgment, in order to acquit the guilty; and the place where the innocent is found, there the guilty is to tyrannise over him, because of the guilt of the wicked generation.

I said in my heart, that God will judge in the great day of judgement the righteous and the guilty, because a time is appointed for every thing, and for every work done in this world they will be judged there.

I said in my heart concerning the children of men, as to the chastisements and evil events which come upon them, God sends these to try and to prove them, to see whether they will return in repentance and be forgiven and healed; but the wicked who are like beasts do not repent, therefore they are reprov'd thereby to their own condemnation.

For as to the destiny of the wicked, and the destiny of the unclean beast, it is one destiny for both of them; and as the unclean beast dies so he dies who does not return in repentance before his death; and the breath of life over both is judged alike in every manner, and the advantage of a sinner over the unclean beast is nothing but the burial place; for all is vanity.

All go to one place; all the inhabitants of the earth are made of dust, and when they die, all return to the dust.

Who is wise to know the breathing spirit of the children of men, whether it goes upward to heaven, and the breathing spirit of cattle, whether it goes down to the earth?

I saw, therefore, that there is no good in this world, but that man should rejoice in his good works, and eat and drink, and do good to his heart; because this is his good part in this world, to acquire thereby the world to come, so that no man should say in his heart, "Why am I

distributing money to do charity? I had better leave it to my son after me, or be nursed for it in my old age;" because who can bring him to see what will be after him?

Chapter 4

And I turned and saw all the oppressions which are done to the righteous in this world under the sun, from the hand of their oppressors; and there is none that should speak consolation to them; and there is none to deliver them from the hand of their oppressors with strong hand and power, and none comforts them.

And I praised the dead who have long since died, and do not see the punishment which comes into the world after their death, more than the living, who live in this world in so much misery, till now.

And better than both of them is he who has not lived till now, and has not been created, who does not see the bad doings which are done in this work under the sun.

And I saw all the trouble and every good work which the children of men do, to be nothing but jealousy, man emulating his neighbour, to do like him; he who emulates his neighbour to do good like him, the word of heaven will do him good; and if he emulate him in evil, to do like his badness, the word of heaven will do him evil; and also these things are vanity for the wicked, and breaking of spirit.

The fool goes and folds his hands in summer, and will not labour; and in winter eats all he has, even the garment from the skin of his flesh.

Better for a man one handful of food with comfort of soul, and without rapine and violence, than two handfuls of eating with rapine and violence, which in future will be requited in the judgment in labour and breaking of spirit.

And I turned and saw the vanity which is destined to be in this world under the sun.

There is a solitary man, and no second besides him, he has even no son nor brother to inherit his property, and there is no end to all his labour, and even his eye cannot be satisfied with his riches, and he does not say to his heart, "Why am I labouring and restraining my soul from good? I will arise now, and will do charity therefrom, and will be joyful in this world with the children of men, and with the righteous in the world to come;" this, too, is vanity, and an evil work.

Better two righteous in a generation than one, and it is they who lead successfully, and cause their words to be heard; they have a good reward in the world to come for their labours which they laboured to sustain their generation.

For if one of them falls upon the bed and lies sick, the other will cause his friend to rise by his prayer; but if there is only one innocent man in a generation, if he falls upon the bed and lies sick, he has no companion in his generation to pray for him, yet shall he rise by his own merit from his sickness.

Also if two sleep together—a man and his wife, they will be warm in the winter; but one, how can he be warm?

And if a wicked and strong man rises in a generation, and his works are injurious, and cause punishments to come in the world, two righteous shall stand up against him, and abolish the punishment by their merits; and how much more useful are three righteous who are in a generation, and peace is among them, like a chain that is woven of three-fold cords, which does not easily break.

Better, i. e., Abraham who is the poor youth, and in whom was the spirit of prophecy from the Lord, and to whom the Lord was known when three years old, and who would not worship an idol—than the wicked Nimrod, who was an old and foolish king. And because Abraham would not worship an idol, he threw him into the burning furnace, and a miracle was performed

for him from the Lord of the world, and he delivered him from it; and even after this, Nimrod had no sense to be admonished not to worship the idol which he worshipped before.

For Abraham went out from the family of idolaters, and reigned over the land of Canaan, for even in the reign of Abraham, Nimrod became poor in the world.

King Solomon said. By the spirit of prophecy from the Lord, I foresaw all the living who walk in their folly rebel against Rehoboam, my son, under heaven, and divide his kingdom to give it to Jeroboam, son of Nebat – except the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, whose heart was faithful with the boy, that is, Rehoboam my son, who, second in my kingdom, is to rise and reign in Jerusalem, the place of his inheritance.

There was no end to all the house of Israel, to all the righteous before whom he ruled; but they advised him in their wisdom to lighten their yoke, and he in his folly went and took counsel with the youth, and they in their folly, advised him to make heavier the yoke of his kingdom upon the people of the house of Israel, and he left the advice of the aged, and followed the advice of the latter; but these latter ones were afterwards confounded and displeased with him, and they caused him to flee, so that the ten tribes should separate from him ; and the wicked Jeroboam ruled over them ; I said this too is vanity for Rehoboam my son, and breaking of spirit to him.

Thou son of man, guard thy feet when thou goest to the sanctuary of the Lord to pray, so that thou goest not there full of sin before thou has repented, and incline thine ear to receive the teaching of the Law from the priests and sages, and be not like fools, who bring sacrifices for their sins, and do not leave off their evil works which they hold in their hands, and they have no acceptance, for they know not whether they do good or evil therewith.

Chapter 5

Do not hurry on thy language so as to make a mistake in the words of thy mouth, and let not thy heart make a vow, resolving to do something at the time when thou prayest before the Lord, for the Lord rules over all the world, and sits upon the throne of glory in the high heavens, and thou sittest on earth, therefore let the words of thy mouth be few.

For as a dream comes through the thoughts of the heart engaged in a multitude of business, so the noise of the fool through the multitude of empty words.

When thou vowest a vow before the Lord, do not defer to pay it, for the Lord hath no pleasure in fools, because they defer their vows and do not pay, but thou, whatsoever thou vowest, pay.

It is better for thee that thou vowest not, than that thou vowest and pay not.

Do not degrade the words of thy mouth to cause judgments of Gehenna upon thy flesh; and in the day of the great judgment thou wilt not be able to say before the avenging angel who exercises dominion over thee, that it is an error; why then shall the anger of the Lord be kindled against the voice of thy shamefully uttered language, and destroy the works of thine hand?

For in the multitude of the dreams of the false prophets, and in the vanities of sorcerers, and in the many words of the wicked, believe not, but serve the wise and the just; from them seek instruction, and fear before the Lord.

When thou seest the oppression of the poor, robbery, and justice in the city, be not astonished in thy heart, saying, How can the will of the Lord be with all this? for the mighty God from on high watches the works of the children of men, whether good or evil, and from his presence are

sent forth proud and powerful men to rule over the wicked, and to be appointed masters over them.

And the great advantage of cultivating the land is above all, for when the subjects of a country revolt, and the king flies from them into the country, if he has no more to eat, this very king becomes subject to a labourer in the field.

A merchant who loves to acquire money, and men of business, shall not be satisfied in amassing money ; and he who loves to heap up great mammon, has no praise in the world to come, unless he has done charity with it, because he has not deserved to eat fruit; this, too, is vanity.

When good is multiplied in the world, the children of men who eat it are also multiplied; and what advantage is there to the owner who gathers it unless he does good with it, that he may see in the world to come the reward given with his eyes.

Sweet is the sleep of a man who serves the Lord of the world with all his heart; and he has rest in his grave, whether he lives few years or many years; after having served the Lord of the world in this world, he will inherit in the world to come a reward for the works of his hand. And the wisdom of the Law of God belongs to the man who is rich in wisdom; in the same manner as he occupies himself with it in this world, and exerts himself in learning, so will it rest with him in the grave, and not leave him alone; just as a woman does not leave her husband to sleep alone.

There is a sore evil which I saw in this world under the sun, and there is no remedy for it; a man who gathers riches and does no good with them, and at the end of days these riches are kept for him for his condemnation in the world to come.

And the riches, which he leaves to his son after his death, shall perish, because he got them in an evil employment, and they shall not abide in the hand of the son whom he has begotten, and nothing whatever shall remain in his hand.

As he came out of his mother's womb naked, without a covering, and without any good, so shall he return to his grave, void of merit, just as he came into this world; and he shall receive no good reward whatever for his labour, to carry with him into the world whither he goes, to be a merit in his hand.

And this also is a sore evil, and there is no remedy for it, as he came into this world void of merit, so he shall depart into that world; and what advantage has he that he labored for his spirit?

Also all his days he dwells in darkness, that he may eat his bread alone, and he sees in much indignation, and his life is in sickness and vexation.

And behold that which I have seen good for the children of men, and that which is comely for them to do in this world, that they eat and drink from their labours, in order not to put forth the hand to oppression and rapine, and to keep the words of the law, and to have compassion on the poor, so that they may see good in all their labours wherewith they labour in this world under the sun, the number of the days of a man's life, which God in his providence gives to him; for this is his portion, and none's beside him.

Also every man to whom the Lord has given riches and wealth, and if the Lord gave him power to eat of it in this world, and to do good with it, and to receive a full reward in the world to come, and to rejoice in his work with the righteous, behold! this is a gift which is given to him in providence, it is from the Lord.

For not many are the days of man's life; who tries to find out the days of his life, how many of them will be good, and how many of them will be evil? because it is not in the power of the children of men; but it is fixed about him from the Lord, how many days he shall suffer, and how many days he shall be in the joy of his heart.

Chapter 6

There is an evil which I saw in this world under the sun, and it is great upon the children of man.

A man to whom God gave in his providence riches, honour, and wealth, and his soul lacks nothing of all which he desires, and the Lord has not given him power, on account of his sins, to enjoy it; but he dies without issue, and his kinsman would not take possession of his inheritance, wherefore his wife will be married to a stranger, and he will take away the inheritance and consume it; all this his sins have brought upon him, because he did therewith no good whatever, and his riches turned out to be to him vanity and a sore evil.

If a man should beget a hundred children, and live many years, and be in power and dominion all the days of his life, and his soul has not enjoyed the good which he has, because he loved his riches, and has not acquired therewith a good name, nor even prepared himself a grave, I say by the divine word, better than he an untimely birth, which has not seen this world.

For in vanity he came into this world, and departs in darkness into that world; and in darkness is his name covered, because he has no merit, and has not acquired a good name worthy of remembrance.

And even the light of the sun he saw not, and did not know good from evil, to discern between this world and the world to come.

And if the days of the life of this man were two thousand years, and he had not studied the Law, and had not done judgment and justice by the oath of the word of the Lord, in the day of his death his soul will go to Gehenna, to the same place whither all sinners go.

As for all the labours of man, he labours for the food of his mouth; and by the word of the mouth of the Lord he is sustained, and even the soul of man is not satisfied with eating and drinking.

For what advantage has the wise man in this world over the fool, because of the wicked generation by which he is not accepted; and what is this poor man to do but to study the law of the Lord, that he may know how he will have to walk in the presence of the righteous in paradise.

It is better for a man to rejoice about the world to come, and to do righteousness, and to see a good reward for his labours in the day of the great judgment than to go into that world with an afflicted soul; for this is vanity, and a breaking of spirit to a guilty man.

That which has been in the world, behold! its name has long been called, and has been made known to the children of men from the day that the first Adam existed, and all is the decree of the Lord; and men cannot stand in judgment with the Lord of the world, who is stronger than he.

For there are many things which multiply vanity in the world, what advantage has the man who is occupied with them?

For who is he that knows what will do men good in this world, but to study the Law, which is the life of the world; and all the number of the days of his vain life which he lives, are in the time of his death considered like a shadow; for who is he that can tell man what there is before him in this world under the sun?

Chapter 7

Better the good name which the righteous acquire in this world, than the anointing oil which was poured upon the heads of kings and priests; and the day wherein a man dies and departs to the grave with a good name and merits, than the day wherein the wicked is born into the world.

It is better to go to a mourning man to comfort him, than to go to the house of a feast of wine of the scorers; for into the house of mourning thither is the end of all men to go, for upon all is decreed the decree of death, and by going into the house of mourning the righteous man sits

down and takes to heart the words of death; and if there be any evil in his hand he will leave it, and return in repentance before the Lord of the world.

Better is the anger wherewith the Lord of the world is angry with the righteous in this world, than the laughter wherewith he laughs at the wicked; for by the displeasure of the face of the Shechinah come famine and punishment into the world to improve the heart of the righteous, and they pray before the Lord of the world, who has mercy upon them.

The heart of the wise mourns over the destruction of the temple, and grieves over the captivity of the house of Israel; and the heart of fools is in the joy of the house of their scoffings; they eat and drink and fare sumptuously, and do not take to heart the affliction of their brethren.

Better to sit at the teaching of the house of instruction, and to hear the reproof of the wise in the Law, than for a man to go to hear the sound of a musical instrument of a fool.

For as the sound of the crackling of thorns which burn under a pot, so is the noisy laughter of the fool; this also is vanity.

For the robber mocks at the wise man because he goes not in his way, and destroys with his evil speech the prudent heart of the wise, which was given to him as a gift from heaven.

Better the end of a thing than the beginning thereof, for in its beginning man knows not what its end will be, but the end of a good thing is known to a good man; and better before the Lord is a man who rules over his spirit and subdues his carnal thoughts, than a man who walks in the pride of his spirit.

And when chastisements from heaven come upon thee, do not hasten thy heart to anger, and to utter words of rebellion against heaven, for if thou bearest them patiently, they will depart from thee; and if thou art rebellious and angry, know that anger rests in the lap of fools till it has destroyed them.

In the time of oppression, say not what was before now was good in the world; for the former days were better, and the men of that generation had better doings than these, therefore good came to them; and thou askest not according to wisdom about this.

Good is the wisdom of the law, along with the inheritance of money, and better still for a man to humbly conduct himself with men, the dwellers of the earth, who see good and evil under the sun in this world.

For as a man is sheltered under the shadow of wisdom, so he is sheltered under the shadow of money, when he does alms with it; and the advantage of knowing the wisdom of the law is that it raises its possessor from the grave for the world to come.

Consider the work of the Lord, and his strength, who made the blind, the hunchback, and the lame, to be wonders in the world; for who is he that can make straight one of these, but the Lord of the world who made him crooked?

In the day when the Lord is doing good, be thou also happy and do good to all the world; that the evil day may not come upon thee, see and behold! and also God has made this against that to reprove the men of the world, so that man should not find after him any evil in the world to come.

All this I saw in the days of my vanity, that from the Lord are decreed good and evil to be in the world, according to the planets under which the children of men are created; for there is a righteous man perishing in his righteousness in this world, and his merit is kept for him for the world to come; and there is a wicked man who prolongs his days in his guilt, and the account of his evil doings is kept for him for the world to come, to be requited for it in the day of the great judgment.

Be not over-righteous when the guilty is found guilty of death in thy court of judgment, so as to have compassion on him and not to kill him; and do not thus become over-wise with the wisdom of the wicked who stand

in the way, and do not learn their ways; why, then, wilt thou destroy thy way?

Go not after the thought of thy heart to sin much, and do not make thy way far from the teaching of the law of God to become a fool; why shouldst thou cause death to thy soul, and the years of thy life be shortened to die, before thy time comes to die?

It is good thou shouldst combine the affairs of this world, namely, to do good to thyself in the way of merchants, and also that thou hold fast thy portion in the Book of the Law, for a man fearing before the Lord performs the duty of both.

And the wisdom of Joseph, son of Jacob, helped him to make him wise before his ten righteous brethren, who ruled in the fear of the Lord; and the evil spirit did not rule in them when they were in the metropolis of Egypt, and did not kill their brother Joseph who annoyed them at that time with the voice of his words.

For there is no righteous man in the land, who does good all his days, and sins not before the Lord; but the man who sins before the Lord, it behoves him to return in repentance before he dies.

Moreover give not thy heart to accept all the words which the wicked speak to thee, that the days may not come when thou shalt hear thy servant curse thee, and thou hast not the power to be delivered from his hands.

Then see to it, adjudicate thy cause when a man curses thee who is not like thyself; for also many times thy heart knows that thou too hast cursed other men.

All that I said I have tried by wisdom: I said by my word, I shall also be wise in all the wisdom of the Law, but it was far from me.

Behold, long has it been far from the children of men to know all that has been from the days of old; and who is he that will find out by his wisdom the secret of the day of death, and the secret of the day when the King Messiah will come?

I turned to think in my heart, and to know and to examine and to seek wisdom, and the estimate of the reward of the works of the righteous, and to know the punishment of the guilt of the fool, and the understanding of the fear of the Kingdom.

And I found a thing more bitter to man than the bitterness of the day of death, namely, a woman who causes much tribulation to her husband, and entangles him; in whose heart are snares, and whose hands are bound that she might not work with them; the righteous before God is the man who gets rid of her by a bill of divorcement, and relieves himself of her; but the guilty before God is the man who abides with her, and is ensnared with her adultery.

Behold, this is the work which I have found, said Coheleth, who is called Solomon, King of Israel, I have examined the planets one in connection with the other, to find out the account of the children of men, what will be in their end.

There is another thing which my soul is still seeking, and I have not found, namely, a perfect and just man, without any corruption, as Abraham; from the days of the first Adam till the righteous Abraham was born, who was found faithful and just among the thousand kings that gathered together to build the tower of Babel? and a woman, as Sarah, among all the wives of those kings, I have not found.

Only, behold! this I found, that God made the first Adam upright before him and just; and the serpent and Eve seduced him to eat of the fruit of the tree, because those who eat its fruit would be wise to discern between good and evil, and they brought upon him and all the inhabitants of the earth the day of death; and they sought to find many accounts in order to bring terror upon the inhabitants of the earth.

Who is as a wise man, that he can stand before the wisdom of the Lord, and know the interpretations of his words, like the prophets? The wisdom of a wise man enlightens the brightness of his face among the righteous, and as for the impudent, all his ways are changed from good to bad. Guard thy mouth about the commands of the King to keep whatsoever he commands, and be also on thy guard about the matter of an oath of the Lord, that thou swear not by the name of his word in vain.

And in the time of the anger of the Lord do not cease to pray before him, tremble before him, go and pray and seek mercy from him, because thou canst not stand in an evil matter; for the Lord of all worlds, the Lord, will do what he pleases.

In the place where the word of the King who rules over all the world is gone forth, it is done immediately, and who is the man that would restrain his hand, and say unto him, What doest thou?

The man who keeps the commandments of the Lord shall not know any evil in the world to come; and the time of prayer, and judgment, and truth, is known in the heart of the wise.

For to every business there is a good and an evil time, and by a true judgment is the whole world judged; and when it is decreed from the Lord that punishment should be in the world, it is because of the guilt of evil doers which is heavy upon them.

For no wise man knows what will bewith him at the end, for when it shall be the pleasure before the Lord to afflict him, who is he that will tell him it?

There is no man who has power over his breathing soul to retain the soul of life, that it should not depart from the human body; and there is no power in the day of death for a man to save his companion, and no instruments of war to help in the battle, and guilt will not save its master in the great day of judgment.

All this I saw which has happened in this world, and I gave my heart to know all the work which is worked in this world under the sun, at the time when man rules over man to afflict him.

And indeed I have seen sinners who are buried and blotted out of the world, from the holy place where the righteous dwell, and went to be burned in Gehenna, and are forgotten from among the inhabitants of the city, and as they have done to others, so it is done to them; also this is vanity.

And because the evil thing, the punishment of the wicked, is not quickly executed upon their evil works, therefore the heart of the children of men is full in them to do evil in this world.

And when a sinner does evil a hundred years, and space is given him from the Lord in order that he may repent, yet is it revealed to him by the Holy Spirit, and I know that it will be well in the world to come with those that fear the Lord, that fear before him, and do his will; and that it shall not be well with the wicked, and there shall be no space for him in the world to come; and in this world the days of his life shall be cut off, they shall fly and pass away like a shadow, because he feared not before the Lord.

There is a vanity that is decreed to be done upon the face of the earth; there are righteous to whom evil happens as if they had done like the deeds of the wicked, and there are wicked to whom it happens as if they had done like the works of the righteous; and I saw by the Holy Spirit that the evil which happens to the righteous in this world is not for their guilt, but to free them from a slight transgression, that their reward may be perfect in the world to come; and the good that comes to the sinners in this world is not for their merits, but to render them a reward for their small merit they have acquired, so that they may eat their reward in this world, and to destroy their portion in the world to come; I said, by my word, this also is vanity.

And I praised the joy of the Law, since there is no good for man in this world under the sun, but to eat and drink and rejoice in his labour and in his portion, which is given to him from heaven, and not stretch out his hands in violence and rapine; and this will lead him to peace in that world, and he shall receive a perfect reward for his labours wherewith he sincerely laboured all the days of his life, which the Lord gave him in this world under the sun.

As I gave my heart to know the wisdom of the Law, and to see the business which is done upon the earth, for even the wise who desires to be occupied with the Law and to find wisdom must toil, since he has no rest in the day, and sees no sleep with his eyes in the night.

And I saw every mighty work of the Lord, for it is awful; and man cannot find out the mighty work of the Lord which is done in this world under the sun; when man labours to seek what will be, he shall not find it; and even if a wise man says by his word, that he will know what will be at the end of days, he cannot find it.

Chapter 9

Chapter9 line1 For all this I set my heart to investigate all this that the righteous and the wise and their students who serve them on the business of the study of Torah and are given in the hand of god and from him is decreed on all the world all what will be in their days even the mercy they will feel even the hatred they will feel, there is no person who is a prophet in the world who will know what will be in people: All in their mazal[luck or planet] God decrees to be ahead of them.

2 Everything depends on mazal, from heaven it is decreed what will happen in the future to the entire earth, One to the innocent and the guilty, who fixes his way and makes modest his soul, and one who defiles his soul [makes himself impure] one who sacrifices a holy property and one who does not sacrifice a holy property, like the good like the guilty, like a man whose days are for lying like a man who fears an oath.

3 This is an evil mazal in all the world that is done under the sun, for one happening is for all, to all the inhabitants of the earth, even if the heart of people is filled with badness about this, and intrigues are in their heart, all the days of their life. and after a man's end it is saved for him to argue with the dead about the judgement of the guilty.

4 For who is the man who adheres to all the words of the Torah to purchase the life of the world to come? He has hoped. For a live dog is better than a lion that is dead.

5 For the righteous know that if they sin, they will be considered as dead in the world to come. Therefore, they guard their ways and do not sin and if they sin, they return in repentance. But the sinners do not know anything good because they do not make their deeds good in their lifetime and they do not know anything good in the world to come and they do not have a good reward after their death for their memory is forgotten from the righteous.

6 After the death of the wicked they have no needs. Their love, their hatred, and their envy have already perished from the world and they no longer have a good portion with the righteous in the world to come. And they have no pleasure from anything that is done in this world under the sun.

7 Solomon said by the spirit of prophecy from before the Lord, "The Master of the World will say to all the righteous ones individually, Go eat in joy your bread which was given to you for the bread which you gave to the poor and the needy who were hungry, and drink with a happy heart your wine which is hidden for you in the Garden of Eden in exchange for the wine which you mixed for the poor and needy who were thirsty. For God has already accepted your good deeds.

8 At all times let your garments be white without all stain of sin and acquire a good name which is compared to anointing oil so that blessing may come upon your head and your goodness will not be lacking.

9 See a good life with a wife whom you love all the days of your vain life which the Lord gave you by your mazal in this world under the sun. For it is your portion in your life and in your labor wherein you labor in this world under the sun.

10. Whatever charity your hand finds to do, do for the needy with all your strength, for after death a man has neither work nor reckoning nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave where you are going and nothing will help you but good deeds and charity alone.

11. King Solomon said, "While I was sitting on my royal throne, I observed and saw in this world under the sun that not men who are swift as the eagle are helped to run to escape death in battle and heroes are not helped by their might when they instigate a war and also sages are not helped by their wisdom to be sated with bread in a time of famine and the intelligent are not helped by their intelligence to be sated with bread in a time of famine and even those who are wise are not assisted by their wisdom to gather the grain place and the discerning are not helped by their knowledge to find mercy in the eyes of the king. For time and chance happen to all of them according to their mazal.

12. For even it is not made known to a man his time, whether good or bad what will be in the world and come upon him. Like fish of the sea which are captured in a net and like birds of heaven which are captured in a snare, like them people are snared in an evil time which falls on them in one moment from the sky.

13. Also this I saw, that she is wisdom in this world under the sun and it is much to me.

14. The body of a man is compared to a little city and heroes, a few soldiers are in its midst and are slight in its merit in the heart of man helpful to the body [against] the evil inclination which may be compared to a great and powerful king enters the body to conquer and it surrounds the heart in order to make it err and it builds against it a dwelling place because it wishes to cause him to depart from the way which is straight before the Lord to capture him in the great snares of Gehenna in order to burn him seven times for his sins.

15. And there was found in the body the good inclination humble and wise and it prevailed over it and conquered it by its wisdom and it saved the body from the judgment of Gehenna by its power and its wisdom just as the soldier does battle and saves the inhabitants of the city by the wisdom of his heart and no man remembered afterward the good inclination which saved him but says to himself "I am innocent just as the inhabitants of the city do not remember that poor man who saved them.

16. And I said, the good words of the righteous are better than the force of the heroism of the sinner, for the wisdom of the righteous and his merit saves him and the people of his generation. But the strength of the wicked who persists in the stubbornness of his heart without returning in repentance destroys only him. And the wisdom of the righteous poor is despised in the eyes of the wicked of his generation and when he reproves them for their evil deeds the words of reprove are not accepted.

17. The word of the silent prayer of the sages are accepted by the Master of World more than the acceptance of the wicked man who rules over fools who entreats but is not accepted.

18. The wisdom of the wise in the time of trouble is better than weapons when war breaks out one sinner in a generation causes much good to be destroyed from the world.

Chapter 10 targum 1. And the yetzer hara (evil inclination) which dwells at the gates of the heart is like a fly and causes death in the world because it betrays the wise when he sins and wounds the good name which had resembled anointing oil scented by perfumes, and how much more beautiful and precious than the wisdom of the wise and the wealth of the wealthy is a man whose folly is little and light.

2. The heart of the wise is to attain the Torah which is given by the right hand of 'n and the heart of the fools is to get possession of gold and silver....

3. And even walking in a bad path in the time his heart is foolish, lacking in wisdom, and he does things not kosher to do, and all say that he is a fool....

4. If the spirit of the yetzer hara (evil inclination) rules over you and grows strong to overcome you, do not leave your good place where you used to stay, for the words of the Torah were created as a cure in the world so that great sins may be forgiven and forgotten by

5 .n. There is an evil I saw in this world under the sun and it causes damage in the world like a matter of error which proceeds hurriedly against a man from a ruler. 6. He gave the wicked and foolish Edom to enjoy mazal (good fortune) and to enjoy prosperity from the highest heavens and his armies are proud and numerous while the people of the house of Israel are enslaved under him in exile, and from their many sins, those rich in property become poor and in their poverty dwell among the nations....

7. Solomon the prophet said by the spirit of prophecy, "I have seen the people who were enslaved previously to the people of Israel, growing strong and riding on horses like rulers while the people of Israel and their nobles walk like slaves on the earth."...

8. The Attribute of Justice answered and so said: "They caused all this themselves just as a man who digs a pit at the crossroads is liable to fall [in it] so a people who transgressed the decree of the Memra of 'n and breached the fence of the world falls into the hand of the wicked king who bites them like a snake....

9. King Solomon the prophet said, "It was revealed to me that Manasseh the son of Hezekiah will sin and bow to idols of stone, therefore he will be delivered into the hand of the king of Assyria who will bind him with chains because he made light of the words of Torah which were originally written on tablets of stone, therefore, he will suffer for them, And Rabshakeh his brother will worship images of wood and leave the words of the Torah which were put in the ark of acacia wood, therefore he will be burned with fire by the angel of 'n."...

10. And when the people of Israel sin, and the heavens will become hard as iron and not give rain and that generation does not pray before 'n so that the rain does not fall therefore, the whole world is wasted by famine, and when they repent and are assembled overcome their Yetzer and appoint leaders to seek mercy from the God of Heaven, they have pleasure due to the abundance of the excellence of their wisdom....

11. When seraphim [snakes] are stirred up to bite and to cause harm in the world, it is on account of the sins of Israel who do not engage in the words of Torah quietly, and also there is no advantage for a slanderer who speaks with a third tongue for he will be burned in the fire of Gehenum....

12. The words of the mouth of a wise person who is found in the generation, when punishment comes upon the world he prays and drives out the punishment and finds mercy before 'n, the lips of a foolish man are full of anger and therefore all the world is destroyed....

13. The beginning of the words of his mouth is foolishness and the end of his utterance is fear and evil.

14. And the fool multiplies empty words which no one needs until a man does not know what will in his days and what will be at his end who can tell him?...
15. The labor of a fool who labors in his foolishness wearies him so that he does not learn how to go to the city in which the wise live in it to seek from him instruction....
16. Woe to you O Land of Israel when the wicked Jeroboam rules over you and abolishes for you the morning sacrifice and your nobles, before they offer the morning sacrifice eat bread....
17. Happy are you O Land of Israel when rules over you Hezekiah the son Ahaz who is a descendent of the House of David king of Israel, for he is a man strong in Torah who fulfills the commandments of the law and your nobles after offering the daily sacrifice eat bread at the time of the fourth hour from the labor of their hands, by the strength of Torah and not by sloth nor by blindness of the eye....
18. A man is commanded to distance from uncleanness of blood [menstrual blood] and (does not) with laxity engage with Torah and commands this man is in danger of not having children, and in carrying out her duty of watching [her menstrual times] she does not observe them she is (always) in a menstrual state in her house....
19. In joy the righteous make bread to feed the hungry poor and the wine which they mix for the thirsty it will be joy for them in the world to come, and their redemption money will testify in favor of them in the world to come in the presence of all.
20. Do not curse the king even in your thought in the secret places of your heart. and do not curse the sage in your bedroom, for the angel Raziel proclaims everyday from heaven upon Mt. Horeb and a voice goes through the whole world, and Elijah the High Priest flying through the air of ה' heaven like an eagle with wings and declares matters that are done in secret to all the dwellers of the earth.

Chapter 11

- CHAPTER 1. Give your sustaining bread to the poor who go in ships on the face of the water, for after many days there you will find a reward [alternative reading בְּעֹלְמָא הַזֶּה in this world] and in the world to come.
2. Put a good part of your seeds into your field in Tishri and do not refrain from sowing also in Kislev [alternative reading Marcheshvan], for you do not know what evil will be on the earth, whether the earlier or the later crops will succeed.
 3. If the clouds will fill with rain, they pour out their water on the earth, because of the merit of the righteous, and if there is no merit in that generation, they descend upon the sea or the desert so that the people will not have benefit from them. And if it is decreed from Heaven that the king and his advisers are to fall from their rule, it is from the Memra of Heaven. And if there is plenty or famine in the south or in the north, the place where that decree exists, there it is sent to be.
 4. A man who cares for sorcery and divination will never do good, and one who looks at the Mazalim [the horoscopes] does not collect a reward. For sorcery and divination are like the wind, which cannot be grasped by human hands, and the Mazalim are like the clouds of heaven which leave and do not return.
 5. Just as you do not know how the breath of the spirit of life enters the body [of an embryo] which is lying in its pregnant mother's womb, and as you do not know if it will be male or female until the time it is born, so you do not know the work of ה' who does everything in His wisdom.
 6. In the days of your youth, marry a wife and get children, and in the time of your old age, do not leave the wife of your portion from stopping

birth of children, for you do not know which of them is chosen to be good, the one or the other or if both of them will be equally good.

7. And sweet is the light of the Torah, and it is good to light up dim eyes that they may see the glory of the face of the Shecina, which will light up the face of the righteous from the splendor of His Shecina so that their beauty may be like the sun.

8. For if a man lives many days in all of them he should rejoice and occupy himself with the Torah of 'n. And let him remember the dark days of death and not sin. For many are the days which the deceased lies in the grave and it is appropriate for him to get judgment from Heaven for his life which he loved. All the time punishment will come on him for vanities he has done.

9. Rejoice, Youth, in the days of your youth, and let your heart be glad in the days of your boyhood, and walk humbly in the ways of your heart, and be careful in what you see not to see evil and know that for all these things 'n will bring you to judgment.

10. And remove anger from your heart that you should not cause evil to your flesh for youth and the days of blackness of hair are transient. (A different version: Remove anger from your heart for anger kills people and also, it brings down many to Gehenna, but as for you, it is appropriate to save yourself from the judgment of Gehenna and know that all of this world is considered transient and nothing remains to a man from all his works except the good deeds which shield him and also benefit him in the world to come.)

Chapter 12

1. Remember your Creator to hold Him dear in the days of your boyhood until there will not come to you evil days and you will reach years that you will say, I have no desire for them.

2. Before that will not change the brightness of your face, which is like the sun, and before the light of your eyes becomes blind, and until the beauty of your cheeks should become dark, and before the pupils of your eyes, which compare to the stars, become dim, and your eyelids run with tears like clouds after rain.

3. On the day your knees will tremble and your arms will knock and the teeth of your mouth will be useless so they are unable to chew food and your eyes which look from the opening of your head will dim.

4. Your foot will be bound from going out in the market, and your appetite for food will leave you, and you will wake from your sleep by the light sound of a bird as if by the voice of thieves that go around at night, and your lips will tremble so they cannot utter songs....

5. Also, you will be afraid to remember things which happened before, and a small pile will appear to you like a high mountain when you walk the path, and the top of your spinal column will protrude because of weakness like the almond tree and your ankles will be swollen and you will refrain from sex, for man turns to go to the grave, and the angels who demand your judgment go about like scribes [Alternative is mourners] in the markets to write the judgment of your account.

6. Before your tongue becomes dumb and cannot speak, and your skull will be cracked, and your gall will be broken on your liver, and your body will run to your grave.

7. And your flesh that was created from dust will return to the earth like it was previously and the spirit of your soul will return to arise in judgment before 'n who gave it to you.

8. When Solomon, king of Israel, looked at the transience of this world and the trivia [חוללות] which people do, Kohelet said with his words, "All is transience."

9. And more than all people, Solomon, who was called Kohelet, was wise and also he taught the people of Israel knowledge, and he listened to the

voice of the wise and explored the books of wisdom, and by the spirit of prophecy from 'n, he prepared wisdom books and independently very many clever proverbs.

10. King Solomon, who was called Kohelet, tried in his wisdom to judge people according to the thoughts of their hearts (minds) without witnesses. Therefore, it was told to him by the spirit of prophecy from 'n, this is already written in the Torah by Moses the teacher of Israel-- proper are the words and true: "By the word of witnesses shall the matter be established."

11. The words of the sages are compared to goads and nails, which are fastened to teach wisdom to those without knowledge, just as a goad teaches the ox, and the rabbis of the Sanhedrin are masters of halacha, and midrash, which was given by Moses the Prophet, who alone fed the people of Israel in the desert with manna and delicacies.

12. And more than these, my son, be careful to make books of wisdom without end, but occupy yourself much with words of Torah and become wise with weariness of flesh.

13. Every word which is done in the world in secret will ultimately be publicized and announced to all of mankind. Therefore, fear the word of 'n and keep His commandment in order not to sin in secret, and if you do sin, be careful to repent, for this should be the path of all men.

14. For every deed 'n will bring to the great day of judgment and will make public all the hidden words of people whether good or evil.